Western Border Interoperability Working Group Meeting *(Continued)*

By E. Wing Spooner espooner@mt.gov

As mentioned last week, the 4th Annual Western Border Interoperability Working Group (WBIWG) met in Lethbridge, Alberta on Wed., April 16. This article is a continuation of a report about that meeting. The purpose of WBIWG is to provide a platform for federal, state and provincial coordination of public safety communications and technologies with an emphasis on border areas.

Scott Bradford, Public Safety Services Bureau (PSSB) for the State of Montana provided an update on the Interoperability Montana (IM) Project. He explained that the top two priorities are to complete the Northern Tier Interoperability Project and to continue establishing a digital microwave network around the state.

The IM System is VHF Trunking (Motorola Smartzone P25) with a conventional interface; wide-area coverage with selected, urban in-building coverage. The system is being designed for 95% reliability of coverage with 40-watt talk-in capability. The Lewis and Clark County radio system has seven active trunked sites.

Glacier County Sheriff Wayne Dusterhoff reported on the Northern Tier, which is a consortium made up of 12 counties and 4 Indian Nations. Once the project goes on line later this year, significant trunking coverage of the border will be available. Work continues on the build-out of a mobile data network along the border.

The governance of the IM Project also was reviewed. It is an association of governments that has been formed using Interlocal Agreements and MOUs. A key objective has been to develop partnerships and agreements for shared use by multi-jurisdictional and multi-level responders.

Scott explained that current funding totals about $27 million, coming from 23 different funding sources. Currently the IM Project is leveraging state money to provide match monies for various federal grants. The total estimated cost for the entire system is between $150 and $180 million. With a population of less than one million, this cost estimate represents a challenging goal. Funding is a critical priority.

Keon Woronuk, Lethbridge Regional Police, and Dave Degenstien, Regional Intelligence Officer with the Canada Border Services Agency, gave a joint presentation about smuggling and child pornography. Keon informed the group about the Integrated Child Exploitation (ICE) Unit and explained Canadian criminal definitions of child pornography. Dave highlighted potential negative consequences of social networking websites, such as identify theft and child exploitation.

Lance Valcour, Inspector and Project Manager with the Ottawa Police, addressed the topic of the Canadian Interoperability Technology Interest Group (CITIG). CITIG brings together representatives from public safety, industry, academia and government to help shape the future of Canadian public safety interoperability.

CITIG aims to facilitate communications, exchange ideas and information and respond to regulatory issues that impact public safety communications. In addition, it provides a test bed where aspects of the five elements of SAFECOM®'s interoperability continuum can be understood, designed, tested and implemented. Lance reviewed several case studies, and explained the group's goals, governance and challenges. For more information about CITIG, visit: www.cprc.org/citig.

Lance also announced an upcoming CITIG regional forum on May 15 at the Radisson Hotel, 405 20th Street East, in Saskatoon from 9:00 am to noon (Central Time). Those interested in furthering public safety interoperability are invited to join in person or via teleconference. Send an e-mail to CITIGForum@cprc.org stating your interest.

David Bemiller, Associate Chief, USBP Headquarters, D.C., reported on the Secure Border Initiative (SBI), a comprehensive multi-year plan established by the Dept. of Homeland Security (DHS) in Nov. 2005 to secure America's borders and reduce illegal immigration. An aggressive program to transform border control technology and tactical infrastructure solutions, called SBI*net*, is being launched by U.S.

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Customs and Border Protection (CBP). CBP is responsible for protecting more than 4,000 miles of border with Canada and 1,900 miles of border with Mexico and for operating 326 official ports of entry.

This $20 million project will field current and next-generation technology to help gain effective control of the nation's borders. For example, SBI*net* is developing and installing roads, lighting, entry detection devices, and pedestrian and vehicle fencing solutions along the Southwest Border. David showcased video examples of automobile collisions with various vehicle, pedestrian and hybrid fences.

CBP is refining its northern border strategy to more comprehensively address all hazards and threats, including reducing vulnerability to terrorism; interdicting the flow of illegal aliens, drugs and contraband; and protecting agricultural and economic interests from pests, diseases and intellectual property. At the same time, it also has to facilitate the flow of legitimate trade and travel. A prototype is being developed that will demonstrate integrated air, land and maritime security solutions in a selected area of the northern border. Achievement of goals will build upon on-going initiatives and strong partnerships with local, state, tribal, federal and foreign governments as well as international partners.

Interoperability Montana Technical Committee Meeting

By E. Wing Spooner espooner@mt.gov

The Interoperability Montana Technical Committee (IMTC) met in Billings on April 24 in conjunction with the IM Retreat. Chair Bob McWilliams began the meeting with individual reports from each consortium followed by reports from each of the sub-committees. Scott Bradford, Public Safety Services Bureau (PSSB), brought the group up to date about recent frequency activities and Dale Osborne, Montana Highway Patrol (MHP), reported on encryption issues.

Roger Smith, MHP, gave a detailed update on network design. He recently completed eight site visits with Harris-Stratex. The Harris-Stratex subcontractor performed a loop-back test on both the western and eastern legs of the Northern Tier, and everything functioned well. Roger explained trouble shooting efforts that are underway and explained plans to upgrade bandwidth between the Blacktail and Big Mountain sites. The timeline was

explained about events that take place after a contract is signed, including obtaining licenses, engineering, radio manufacturing and other activities.

The group recommended purchasing a crystal filter to solve an interference problem at the Jette site. In addition, the IMTC recommended providing funding for System Administrator Training. Ray Hetherington reported that as of April 23, the sub-lease on the Cooney Site was signed by all involved parties, which is a great milestone.

Because of the Memorial Day Holiday, the next face-to-face IMTC meeting will be moved up a week to Monday, May 19 at the State Capitol in Helena beginning at 9:00 am.

Upcoming Meetings

April 28
   IM Finance Sub-Committee Work Session
   Helena ● 9:00 am to 5:00 pm
   Anderson and ZurMuehlen (AZ), 828 Great Northern Blvd.
April 30
   Eastern Tier (ETIC)
   Glendive ● 10:00 am ● Law Enforcement Ctr; 440 Colorado Blvd.
May 1
   NTIP Conference Call ● Telephone ● 9:00 am
May 5
   IM Finance Sub-Committee
   Helena ● 9:00 to noon
   Northrop Grumman, 2401 Colonial Drive
May 5
   IM Governance Committee ● Helena ● 12:30 to 5:00
   State Capitol
May 6
   IM Project Directors (IMPD)
   Helena ● 9:00 to 3:00 pm
    State Capitol
May 7
   Fleet Mapping Sub-Committee
   Helena ● 9:00 am
   Law Enforcement Center, 221 Breckenridge
May 7
   Central Montana Consortium (CMICC)
   Great Falls ● 10:00 am ● Wheat Building, 750 6th Street SW
May 14
   South Central Montana Consortium (SCMIC)
   Ennis ● 10:00 am ● First Madison Valley Bank
May 15
   Saskatchewan Canadian Interoperability Technology Interest
      Group Regional Mtg.
   Saskatoon ● 9:00 a.m. to noon (Central Time)
   Radisson Hotel, 405 20th Street East
   CITIGForum@cprc.org - Send an e-mail if interested.
June 11
   Statewide Interoperable Executive Council (SIEC)
   Helena ● 10:00 am ● Location to be announced